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Week of December 12, 1977

BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT HOLDS
STEADY, BLS REPORTS

WASHINGTON -- The overall unemployment rates for blacks (13.9 percent) and whites (6.0 percent) exhibited little over-the-month change in November, the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

Compared with a year earlier, the rate for blacks has shown no improvement, while the rate for whites has declined by more than a percentage point.

On a national basis, the Bureau reported that employment rose sharply in November but unemployment was little changed.

The November unemployment rate was 6.9 percent, marking the eighth straight month that the rate was within the narrow range of 6.9 and 7.1 percent.

Total employment--as measured by the monthly survey households--rose by 950,000 to 92.2 million in November. Over the past year, employment has expanded by 3.9 million, and the proportion of the population with jobs has risen from 56.2 percent to an alltime high of 57.8 percent.

Nonfarm payroll employment--as measured by the monthly survey or establishments--rose by 310,000 over the month to 83.2 million. Payroll jobs have increased by 3.1 million since November 1976.

The number of unemployed persons was little changed over the month. The November level was 6.8 million, seasonally adjusted, about the same as the levels recorded since April; however, strong declines prior to April accounted for an over-the-year reduction in joblessness of 750,000. Similarly, the rate of unemployment--6.9 percent in November--was about unchanged from the rates registered between April and October but well below the 8.0 percent high for 1976 recorded last November.

While the jobless rate for adult women advanced slightly over the month (to 7.1 percent) and that for teenagers held about steady (at 17.1 percent), the rate for adult men dropped by 0.4 percentage point; this decline represented a return to the September level (of 4.9 percent). On an over-the-year basis, all three rates, but most notably the adult men's have registered reductions.

The rate for full-time workers fell from 6.6 to 6.4 percent in November and was down from 7.6 percent a year earlier.

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The average (mean) duration of unemployment held steady in November at 13.8 weeks but was 1.7 weeks less than in November 1976.

Total employment registered an unusually large increase of 950,000 in November, with all major demographic groups sharing in the growth. Employment has risen almost continuously over the year to 92.2 million, 3.9 million above its year-ago level. This advance was about evenly divided between men and women (16 years and over), but, because the male employment total is much greater than the women's, their percentage increase over the year was considerably less (3.9 versus 5.2 percent for women)

Although not nearly as great as the increase in employment from the household survey, the increase in nonagricultural payroll employment was nontheless substantial. Payroll employment increased 310,000 in November to 83.2 million, seasonally adjusted. All of the major industry groups posted employment gains, as 70 percent of the 172 industries that comprise the BLS diffusion index of private nonagricultural payroll employment showed over-the-month increases. Nonfarm payrolls have expanded by 3.1 million over the past year.

The services industry division had the largest over-the-month employment increases with a gain of 75,000. Manufacturing employment rose by 65,000; most of this increase occurred in the durable goods group, with the lumber, stone-clay-glass, fabricated metals, and electrical equipment industries each registering gains of about 10,000 jobs.

Trade and government also showed sizeable gains in their November payroll counts. All of the increase in government employment occurred in the State and local sector.

Construction employment continued the growth that began early in the year; approximately half of the 30,000 over-the-month increase, however, was due to strike settlements. Contract construction employment in November was 355,000 above its year-ago level.

The average workweek for production of nonsupervisory workers on private nonagricultural payrolls slipped by a tenth of an hour in November to 36.1 hours, seasonally adjusted. The manufacturing workweek,however, edged up by 0.1 hour in November to 40.5 hours, equaling the post-1973 high reached in June of this year. Manufacturing overtime was 3.5 hours, unchanged from October but 0.4 hour above the year-ago level.

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Average hourly earnings of production or nonsupervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls advanced 0.4 percent, seasonally adjusted, in November. Because of the slight decline in hours of work, there was an even smaller increase in average weekly earnings (0.1 percent). Compared with their year-ago levels, average hourly and weekly earnings were up 7.8 and 7.5 percent, respectively.

Before adjustment for seasonality, average hourly earnings were unchanged from October's $5.40 and were 40 cents above the level of November a year ago. Average weekly earnings, however, declined $1.08 from the previous month to $194.40. Over the year, average weekly earnings rose by $13.90.

# # #

OSHA PLANS TO REVOKE 1,100 REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON -- More than 1,100 safety rules that have no direct or immediate effect on worker safety or health are to be revoked, Labor Secretary Marshall and Assistant Secretary Eula Bingham announced in a joint news conference.

The two officials explained that provisions proposed for revocation include such examples as 10 of 12 pages of rules on portable wood ladders, toilet seat requirements, and specifications for fire extinguisher mounting heights.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is also issuing special directions to inspectors that will in most cases eliminate citations and penalties for violations of rules that have little or nothing to do with employee safety and health.

"A few months ago, Dr. Bingham and I announced that we were redirecting the agency to focus on the serious hazards in the workplace," said Marshall. "The action is another significant step in our efforts.

"Unnecessary and overly complex regulations place a tremendous burden not only on businesses but also on our limited inspection resources. As a result, worker health and safety suffers.

"Thousands of working people suffer serious accidents and illnesses each year," explained Marshall, "yet to the best of our knowledge none has been caused by the shape of a toilet seat or because a fire extinguisher was two inches too low. That's why we are today taking steps to eliminate this kind of picayune regulation.

"It is in the interest of business, American workers and OSHA to stop nit-picking and concentrate our efforts on the real hazards to life and limb."

Dr. Bingham said, "The significance of this action goes beyond the obvious benefits to employers and workers. Today's announcement marks one of the few times in history a government regulatory agency has decreased its rules, rather than adding more."

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Dr. Bingham pointed out that the standards revocation project is only a beginning step in the agency's efforts to streamline and simplify job safety and health regulations. She added that the agency also will be proposing complete revisions of several major sections of the general industry standards covering such topics as walking and working surfaces, fire protection and machinery and machine guarding.

The proposed revocation project includes four specific elements, which were explained by the assistant secretary.

"First, we are announcing our intention to revoke more than 1,100 job safety and health provisions from the general industry standards," she explained.

"Most of the rules we are proposing for revocation," Dr. Bingham said, "were adopted by the agency in 1971 from a body of national consensus standards. These standards were developed by such groups as the American National Standards Institute and the National Fire Protection Agency, and were adopted on the heels of the passage of the Act. The intent was to insure at least a minimum level of job safety and health for American workers as soon as possible.

"Unfortunately, we have since learned that many provisions of these standards do not contribute to employee safety and health," Dr. Bingham reported.

"For example, a provision requiring that toilet seats shall be of the open-front type has nothing to do with worker health and safety," explained Bingham. "Why should we have incredibly detailed standards requiring certain types of fire extinguishers to be an exact number of inches from the floor, when we have a section of the standards that simply requires that 'extinguishers shall be conspicuously located where they will be readily accessible and immediately available in the event of fire. That kind of simple direct requirement provides protection for workers without placing an unnecessary burden on the employer."

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Several criteria were used by OSHA to determine which rules were no longer applicable and should not be enforced in the workplace. One group of provisions was found to be obsolete because of technological change or expiration of the time period set forth in the standard itself. Other provisions were directed primarily to employee comfort and convenience rather than to safety and health hazards. Provisions which were intended only for property protection are also included in the proposed revocation as well as standards which cover hazards regulated by another federal agency.

The second part of the announcement outlined the proposed revocation of three special industry standards, so-called, 'vertical standards. OSHA is proposing to revoke the entire sections of the general industry standards which deal with cooperage, baking equipment and laundry machinery and operations.

Dr. Bingham noted that employee safety and health for these special industries can be safeguarded by using other existing OSHA standards of general applicability. Any workplace situation not covered by other existing standards would still be covered by the 'general duty' clause in the OSHA law which requires employers to maintain workplaces free from serious hazards.

"We are proposing to revoke these standards to permit OSHA to concentrate enforcement in areas with the highest potential for serious illness and injury," Dr. Bingham explained.

The agency is publishing all of the standards proposed for revocation in a special issue of the Federal Register. That issue will completely reprint OSHA general industry standards, showing provisions to be revoked in brackets with marginal heavy black lines for further identification.

The third part of the announcement establishes guidelines for enforcement of the standards until the revocation process is finalized.

"Revocation is a lengthy process," Dr. Bingham said, "and we are concerned with taking action now to implement our "common sense approach."

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Therefore, violation of those provisions of the general industry standards which are being proposed for revocation will be treated as 'de minimis' in most cases. This means employers will be notified orally, but no written notices or penalties will ensue. In rare instances where a violation of a provision proposed for revocation constitutes a real danger to employee safety, area directors are instructed to confer with their regional administrator before they may issue a citation.

However, the cooperage, laundry and bakery standards proposed for revocation will be enforced as usual until the rulemaking process is completed.

Clarification of the definition of 'de minimis' and establishment of new guidelines on a broader use of the 'de minimis' program was the subject of the fourth and final part of Dr. Bingham's announcement.

The guidelines set forth three criteria for determining a 'de minimis' situation. A 'de minimis' condition exists if:

-- An employer complies with the clear intent of a standard, but deviates from the particular requirements in a way which has no direct or immediate relationship to employee safety. Deviations may involve the use of color, distance requirements, material requirements, specification and sign wording and slight variations in inspections, testing, recordkeeping and maintenance requirements.

-- An employer complies with a proposed amended change to a standard, rather than with the existing standard, and the proposed amendment provides equal or greater safety and health protection.

-- An employer's workplace is technically advanced beyond the requirements of the applicable standards, and provides equivalent or better safety and health protection.

"Within these new guidelines and following these criteria, inspectors should be able to recognize those situations which do not threaten employee safety and health, and thereby concentrate their time and efforts on finding serious dangers. Employers will not be cited for minute differences in implementing the standard, as long as the intent of the standard is carried out," Bingham said.

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"Because of the high level of interest we expect in this rulemaking," Dr. Bingham concluded, "we are providing more time than normal for public comment. Instead of the usual 30 days, we will accept comment until March 3, 1978. This will permit all forms of the media, including monthly trade association magazines, to carry news of our action to their readers. In this way, we hope to get substantial public comment."

OSHA has arranged to print extra copies of this special issue of the standards, both to elicit informed public comment on the proposed revocation and to provide all parties with an up-to-date reference volume. Each of OSHA's regional offices and the national office will furnish single and bulk copies free.

Publication of the proposed revocation notices will soon appear in the Federal Register.

# # #

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF LABOR RAY MARSHALL

WASHINGTON -- Following is the full text of a statement issued by Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall at a news conference announcing proposed elimination of unnecessary safety regulations:

Today we are announcing the proposed elimination of more than 1,100 provisions of the OSHA safety regulations that have little or no bearing on worker health and safety. When this action becomes final it will represent a reduction of more than 10 percent in the volume of OSHA regulations. This action is part of the Carter Administration's continuing effort to make the governmental regulatory process simpler and more efficient.

In May, Eula Bingham and I announced that we were redirecting OSHA to focus on the serious hazards in the workplace. Today's action is another significant step toward honoring that commitment. Unnecessary and overly complex regulations place a tremendous burden not only on business but also on our limited inspection resources. As a result, worker health and safety suffers.

Thousands of working people suffer serious accidents and illnesses each year. Yet, to the best of our knowledge none of these accidents or illnesses has been caused by the shape of a toilet seat or because a fire extinguisher was two inches too low. That is why we are taking steps today to prune some of the underbrush that stands between OSHA and intelligently focused enforcement.

This project has taught me an important and sobering lesson about government regulation. In working with Eula Bingham and her staff on removing these 1,100 nit-picking provisions, I discovered that the system makes it much easier for the government to promulgate new regulations than to get rid of outmoded or ineffective ones. Things are not impossible. however. Our efforts today indicate that with enough determination and creativity it is possible to beat the system.

Eula Bingham and I have maintained from the outset that many of the traditional criticisms of OSHA were justified. Many have complained about picayune regulations like those on toilet seats or fire extinguishers. We looked into these criticisms and found that they were often correct. That is why we are taking steps to eliminate over 10 percent of the OSHA rule book. This will end some unnecessary harassment of business and allow us to even more vigorously enforce the agency's other regulations. It is the interest of business, American workers and OSHA to stop nit-picking and concentrate our efforts on the real hazards to life and limb.

# # #

Week of December 12, 1977

NEW JOB CORPS CENTER TO OPEN IN NORTH CAROLINA

WASHINGTON -- A new Job Corps Center for 300 disadvantaged youth will be opened this spring near Kittrell, N. C., Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall announced.

This is the 11th new center to be announced in the Administration's effort to double the size of the Job Corps under the President's economic stimulus program launched last May. Start-up costs are estimated to be $1.9 million.

An agreement providing for joint funding by the Labor Department and the State of North Carolina was signed by Governor James B. Hunt and Julian O. Colquitt, regional administrator of the department's Employment and Training Administration.

The new center will be known as the Kittrell Job Corps Center. The centers now in operation throughout the nation have a combined capacity of nearly 21,000 residents.

Plans call for enrolling 150 male and 150 female corpsmembers, aged 16 through 21, when the new center reaches its capacity of 300. The first enrollees are scheduled to arrive at the center in April 1978, with additional enrollees entering until the center reaches capacity in early summer.

North Carolina officials have proposed and the department has agreed to locate the center at Kittrell, 35 miles northeast of Raleigh, at the site of the former Kittrell College.

The center will be operated by a contractor to be chosen from organizations submitting bids in response to a request for proposal to be published soon. The vocational skills to be taught will be decided after a survey of employers' needs in the state.

Prospective enrollees may obtain information on the new center from the North Carolina Employment Security Commisssion.

There are currently 61 Job Corps centers in operation, providing more than 40,000 disadvantaged young men and women a year with skill training, on-the-job experience, remedial education, GED (high school equivalency) training, counseling, and health services.

Job Corps centers are operated by both private profit and non-profit organizations; federal, state, and local government agencies; and Indian tribes and organizations.

# # #

MINORITY YOUTHS, WOMEN TRAINED
AS HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATORS

WEST POINT, Miss. -- Twenty-eight trainees -- including 19 blacks and two women -- have completed an eight-week entry-level course in heavy equipment operation and will soon begin work on the Tennessee-Waterway construction project.

The course was sponsored by Local 624 of the International Union of Operating Engineers under a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to the union and the Recruitment Training Program (R-T-P). A second course was scheduled to begin Dec. 12.

Graduation ceremonies for the first 28 trainees, took place here Dec. 1.

All "Ten-Tom" Waterway contracts require that 80 percent of the workers be residents of the counties near the Tombigbee River. In order to fulfill that goal, RTP has set up outreach offices in Columbus and Tupelo, Miss.

The course includes classroom instruction in grades and grade stakes, heavy equipment components and maintenance and actual on-the-site instruction in the operation of bulldozers, scrapers and end loaders. Trainees are expected to learn additional skills on the job.

Through the cooperation of labor, management and the federal government, it is expected that by 1980 thirty percent of the Tenn-Tom workers will be from minority groups.

Labor Department funded projects have already made it possible for RTP to recruit and train more than 21,000 members of minority gruops and for the Operating Engineers to help train 5,400 minority workers for jobs as heavy equipment operators.

# # #

Week of December 12, 1977

CETA HELPS BLACK WOMEN
GET JOB SKILLS, NEW CAREERS

PORTLAND -- Two black women--Savana Swain and Marsha Carson--acquired job skills for careers of their choice through programs funded by the U.S. Labor Department.

Both, in searching for better employment, turned to programs operated under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

Savana Swain had previously been working at a part-time job, taking an occasional community college course "to pass the time," and rearing her two children.

But a year ago, when her husband was hurt on the job, she realized she would need a permanent job.

She also realized that a high school education completed 15 years ago, and a few unrelated community college courses, were not enough to qualify for the kind of job she was interested in.

So, Swain, 33, turned to a CETA training course in general office work at the Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center.

Amid the clacking of typewriters and general hubbub of the school, located in what was once a five-and-dime store in Northeast Portland she found new hope and sufficient training to get a full-time permanent state civil service job.

Now employed by the tax offices of Multnomah County, she points out that the benefits of the CETA program lie not only in the technical skills taught, but in the social and psychological atmosphere as well.

"CETA helps a lot people get right to the sources," she says.

Marsha Carson, who was looking for something other than a job in a manufacturing plant, also turned to a CETA training course in office skills.

Jobs in a manufacturing plant can pay well, she says, but "I didn't want to spend the rest of my life there."

On her return to Portland, she elected not to return to her former job in a packaging plant and instead looked into other avenues.

"I knew I had some skills," she says, but she also recognized the need for additional training.

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The CETA program provided Carson with two weeks of orientation and an option of going into on-the-job training or school. She chose to attend Northwest College of Business and took secretarial courses.

With the help of an Oregon state employment office, in conjunction with the Portland CETA program, she found the job with Stevens, Thompson & Runyan, Inc., an engineering and planning firm.

Carson has completed a probationary period with the firm and passed her performance review satisfactorily.

Carson is not only pleased with the CETA training and her job; she's also pleased with the follow-up by CETA officials who kept in close touch during an initial period of 90 days to see how she was doing.

"They are genuinely concerned," she says.

Carson is the first, and so far, the only CETA-trained applicant or employee at the company. However, a personnel official of the company states that since Carson has come, "I contact CETA every single time a job comes up."

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EMPLOYMENT COST INDEX--SEPTEMBER 1977

WASHINGTON -- Wage and salary rates measured by the Employment Cost Index rose 1.8 percent for the 3 months ended in September 1977, the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. In the 12 months ended in September 1977, wage and salary rates rose 7.2 percent.

The rate of pay in the manufacturing industry which has the most influence on the overall index, rose from 1.8 to 2.2 percent between the second and third quarters. This rise was offset, however, in the overall index by smaller increases in other industries. The smallest increase was in wholesale and retail trade which experienced the smallest rise compared with other industries in both of the last 2 quarters.

In construction, the quarter-to-quarter slowdown in the rate of increase, from 2.3 to 1.8 percent, was largely a slack-off from the traditional seasonal increases in the spring. In transportation and public utilities, the dip in the rate of increase, from 2.9 to 2.0 percent in the third quarter, reflected fewer deferred negotiated increases and cost-of-living adjustments compared with the preceding quarter.

Among occupations, craft workers experienced an accelerated rise in wages over the quarter, up 2.2 percent from 1.9 percent in the preceding quarter. On the other hand, percentage pay gains were smaller than in the preceding quarter for most blue-collar and service workers. The slowdown was most pronounced for laborers and equipment operatives.

Among white-collar employees, percentage pay gains were highest for clerical workers and lowest for managers, a reversal of their relative standings in the preceding quarter.

Pay of workers in occupations covered by collective bargaining agreements advanced 1.9 percent in the third quarter, compared with 1.7 percent for workers not covered. Pay for workers in metropolitan areas climbed at a slower rate in the third than in the second quarter; outside of metropolitan areas, the rate of advance was higher than in metropolitan areas for the third consecutive quarter.

Over the 12 months since September 1976, increases in the rates of pay for all the occupational groups in the blue-collar category and for service workers exceeded the rate for any of the white-collar groups. In this time span, increases in the rates of pay

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for workers in transportation and public utilities and in manufacturing have been well above the national average, while increases for employees in services and construction have been well below the average.

Pay gains for workers in occupations covered by collective bargaining agreements continued to outspace increases for other workers in the 4 quarters ended in September 1977.

Rate of wage and salary changes in Employment Cost Index, private nonfarm economy, September 1976 through September 1977

(Percent changes)

Series	3 months ended					12 months ended			
	September 1976	December 1976	March 1977	June 1977	September 1977	December 1976	March 1977	June 1977	September 1977
All private nonfarm workers	1.5	1.9	1.5	1.9	1.8	7.2	6.8	6.9	7.2
Workers, by occupational group									
White-collar workers	1.5	1.9	1.3	1.6	1.7	6.6	6.2	6.4	6.6
Professional and technical workers	1.7	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.8	6.3	6.3	6.7	6.8
Managers and administrators	1.0	1.0	2.1	2.0	1.3	5.5	6.3	6.2	6.5
Sales workers	–	–	–	1.7	1.7	–	–	–	–
Clerical workers	2.0	1.4	1.8	1.2	2.0	7.0	6.6	6.5	6.5
Blue-collar workers	1.8	1.9	1.7	2.2	1.8	8.0	7.4	7.8	7.8
Craft and kindred workers	2.0	1.3	2.1	1.9	2.2	7.5	7.7	7.6	7.8
Operatives, except transport	2.0	2.8	1.6	1.7	1.4	8.7	7.4	8.4	7.9
Transport equipment operatives	0.6	0.8	0.4	4.2	1.6	7.3	6.4	6.1	7.2
Nonfarm laborers	1.2	2.3	1.7	2.9	1.3	7.8	7.4	8.4	8.5
Service workers	0.4	2.1	1.3	2.2	1.7	7.9	7.3	6.2	7.5
Workers, by industry division									
Construction	2.6	1.1	0.9	2.3	1.8	–	7.8	7.8	6.2
Manufacturing	1.8	2.2	1.9	1.6	2.2	7.5	7.4	7.8	8.2
Transportation and public utilities	1.3	2.3	1.9	2.9	2.0	8.6	8.6	8.7	9.3
Wholesale and retail trade	0.9	1.9	2.2	1.7	0.9	7.4	7.3	6.9	7.0
Services	1.7	0.6	0.9	1.8	1.8	5.4	4.8	5.1	5.2
Workers, by region									
Northeast	2.5	1.7	1.1	2.0	1.7	6.6	6.0	7.5	6.7
South	1.7	1.3	1.5	2.2	1.9	6.8	5.8	6.8	7.0
North Central	1.5	2.6	0.7	1.5	2.0	7.4	6.6	6.5	7.0
West	0.5	1.6	3.6	1.7	1.5	8.0	7.3	6.7	7.7
Workers, by bargaining status									
Occupations covered by collective bargaining agreements	2.6	2.0	1.4	2.2	1.9	8.1	7.0	8.2	7.7
Occupations not covered by collective bargaining agreements	1.1	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.7	6.8	6.2	6.2	6.9
Workers, by area									
Metropolitan areas	1.7	1.9	1.4	1.8	1.7	7.2	6.7	7.0	7.0
Other areas	0.9	1.8	1.6	2.1	1.8	7.4	6.8	6.5	7.4

Note: The statistics are percent changes in straight-time average hourly earnings over the period indicated. For example, the 1.5 percent change for the "all private nonfarm worker" series in the first quarter 1977 is the actual percent change in straight-time average hourly earnings from the pay period including the 12th of the survey month of December 1976, to the comparable period in March 1977. The statistics are not annualized, nor are they adjusted for seasonal influences.

The computation of percent changes spanning more than one survey period is accomplished by compounding successive changes for individual quarters. In actual practice, the compounding calculations are made to the fifth decimal place.

Dashes in the table indicate that the data collected were insufficient to meet statistical criteria for publication during the periods indicated.

# # #

Week of December 12, 1977

FILLERS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

President Carter has signed the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977, which initially will provide 200,000 job and training opportunities for young people.

* * *

The Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977 creates four new programs to train and employ youths under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), which is administered by the U.S. Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration.

* * *

The Young Adult Conservation Corps, created by the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977, will be operated on public lands by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior under interagency agreements with the Department of Labor

* * *

An Office of Youth Programs is being created in the U.S. Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration to administer programs under the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977 and other youth employment projects.

* * *